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## Satisfaction of participants in physical activity programs as an indicator of quality of life

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### Abstract

The concept of quality of life concerns "overall evaluation of life (how good life is, how satisfactory is for different individuals, social groups, local fare) and evaluation of different conditions or spheres of life: environmental quality, human quality of work (quality of life work), the quality of interpersonal relationships, quality of family life." (Zamfir, Vlăsceanu, 1998).

The concept of quality of life includes both subjective and the objective aspects of human life. Quality of life refers to the subjective satisfaction of people's living conditions, activities, opportunities and results.

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### 1. Paper rationale

Zamfir and Vlăsceanu address in an interesting way the relationship between quality of life and happiness, saying about quality of life that from another perspective resumes the concept of happiness. They also distinguish the difference between the two concepts as follows: "if happiness refers to the subjective state resulting from living their own lives, quality of life refers to both aspects: objective conditions in which human life is constituted and subjective where each evaluates their own life, satisfaction, happiness and fulfillment". (Zamfir and Vlăsceanu, 1998)

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This research is conducted based on a questionnaire targeting quality issues carrying aerobic classes, assessing collaboration with instructors for leisure activities, the quality of physical activity programs and the extent to which expectations were achieved.

## 2. Paper theoretical foundation and related literature

Having a complex composition, the quality of life has not an universal agreed definition. Being a construct so complex, the Australian Centre on Quality of Life describes in 2013 over 1200 instruments that measure the quality of life.

Lupu (2006) identifies dimensions of quality of life: emotional or mental well-being, interpersonal relationships, material wealth, personal affirmation, physical well-being, independence, social integration, ensuring fundamental human rights. Physical education and sport contribute to quality of life influencing emotional state, peer relationships, material wealth (employees relax with a good physical and mental tone are more productive), independence and social integration.

A number of countries collect data about subjective well being in their statistics. OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective well-being, published in 2013 claims the importance for this data to be used for international comparisons in order to know better what is the subjective well being of the citizens and to find measures to improve the subjective quality of life.

Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs in 2013 identifies an hierarchy of the countries depending on the level of happiness. Romania is not in the first 20 countries. The first five countries in the hierarchy are northern countries: Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Referring to Evans, this study approaches the subjective quality of life. Allard, says that "having a good life means having (material needs), love (social needs) and being (personal development needs)" (Allard, 1993 in Nussbaum and Sen, 1993). According to Allard, this study refers to "being", the need for personal development through the practice of physical activity in leisure time.

Physical education fulfils an economic function illustrated on three types of beneficiaries (Șerbănoiu, Tudor, 2007):

- individuals who practice physical exercises;
- parents, sponsors, local, state or private companies;
- society as a whole.

Șerbănoiu and Tudor emphasize the importance of physical education and sports and mentioning at the same time the consequences of the lack of physical activity. Thus, physical activity is a "direct stimulus of the morphofunctional development, its absence could lead to adaptations of involutive type such as appearance of deficitary postures, anxiety or depressive states and the increase of stress levels with major implications on individual health.

According to Veenhoven, appreciation of life is a quality in the eye of the beholder and it seems that the more people have this quality, the more and longer life it is enjoyed. (Veenhoven, 2000)

Brook distinguishes what makes life to be a quality one. He denotes "the degree to which life fits current values and ideals, the degree to which life fits the individual preferences and the degree to which the individual enjoys life subjectively." (Brook, 1993, cit.in Veenhoven, 2000)

## 3. Methodology

This is a pilot study conducted on a total of 30 subjects participating in aerobics classes. Participants are female aged between 18 and 36 years.

With regard to subscriptions at aerobics classes, the majority of subjects (83.32%) come to aerobics classes over half a year: 10% have made subscriptions since 1-3 months old, 6.66% go to aerobics for 3-6 months, 46.66% participate at aerobics for 6-9 months, 16.66% go for 9-12 months and 20% of participants go to aerobics classes for more than a year.

As research methods we used: literature review, questionnaire-based survey, observation, percentage and graphical representation, the method of processing and interpretation of statistical and mathematical data. Processing

data was made using statistical analysis software Microsoft Office Excel.

#### 4. Results

Most of subscribers 83.33% are pleased to have access to sauna, hot showers, free testing aerobics classes and online appointments.

Interestingly, 86.67% of the participants at this study say they have never used sauna and showers at the sports centre. Most of customers (96.66%) declare that they opted not to test free aerobics classes. However 80% of respondents choose to schedule online meetings aerobic and declare to be very pleased with this system of appointments.

Using the method of observation, we notice that four of nine instructors (33.33%) observed in our study make group photos with the participants at the end of activities.

Regarding the distance from home to fitness centre, we find that 66.66% of customers live within 30 minute walk, and 33.33% of customers say they live at a distance of 30-45 minutes walk to the sports centre.

80% of the subjects declare that are very pleased of the number of aerobics classes available at the fitness centre on which they attend and the large variety of the aerobics programs is a main reason for choosing this particular fitness centre.

We analyzed the prices per subscriptions and variety of aerobics programs of four important fitness centres located at a close distance in Bucharest, District number 5. To facilitate data analysis, we noted with A the New Way Fit Fitness Centre, with B the Fitness Club Oroviceanu, with C - Prosper and with D - Unique Taboo Gym.

Analyzing the aerobics classes offer of the four fitness centres located at a close distance in Bucharest, district 5, we find that: A and B provide 15 aerobics programs each, C has a variety of 9 aerobics programs and D has 7 aerobics programs.

As far as that goes to prices per types of subscriptions we notice that:

- 8 session subscription: fitness centre A -145 RON, fitness centre B- 80 RON, fitness centre C -129 RON and fitness centre D - 110 RON;
- 12 session subscription: fitness centre A- 155 RON, fitness centre B - 100 RON, fitness centre C -149, D- 130;
- 1 month subscription: fitness centre A - 170, fitness centre B - 130, fitness centre C - 169, fitness centre D - 140.

Regarding to the aspect of communication with instructors, we find that the opinions of the participants vary. Only 16.66% of respondents declare to be very satisfied with the way they communicate with instructors. 50% of respondents are satisfied on the way they communicate with the specialists in physical education and leisure activities. Interestingly, is the high percentage of those who declare to be in small extent satisfied with the way they relate to instructors (33.33%).

#### 5. Discussions

In 1994, Evans distinguishes between objective quality of life and subjective quality of life following: objective quality of life is given by "individual standard of living represented by verifiable conditions characteristic of a cultural unit" while the subjective quality of life is "the degree where individual life is perceived as fulfilling some internal standards, express or implied."

American Heart Association (2014) recommends that walking is the simplest way to start and continue a healthy life. Walking claims no costs, is easy, safe, provides heart health benefits. Regarding our research, we observe that 21 subjects of 30 declare to know about the importance of being active every day, and the benefits of walking briskly at least 30 minutes per day, but they don't have enough time for doing this activity. Most of participants on this study (21 subjects of 30) declare to be unsatisfied about the spare time that they have after a

hard day work. So, we are entitled to say that although walking has a lot of benefits, it claims after all one cost: time. So, we can say that an effective time management can help subjects to perform physical activities outdoor too and be more satisfied with their lives.

Among the facilities that are available for fitness centre customers we identify sauna, hot showers, free testing services and online scheduling. We observe that only online appointments are of interest to clients of the sports centre.

Most customers who participated at the present study (90%) declare rather to be more interested in the variety of programs offered by a fitness centre, than the cost of the subscription. Also they prefer to participate at various programs of aerobics focused on different types of muscles.

Not opting to test free aerobics classes could mean that they already know the quality of the programs from their friends or other sources.

Regarding participants satisfaction at aerobics classes we observe the following aspects: they declare to be very satisfied with the quality of equipment, the size of rooms, the ambient music, cleanliness and are very pleased of the fact that the specialists in physical exercises and leisure activities are well trained, professionals.

Even though most of the subjects participating in this study said they did not use the sauna, showers and free testing services, they declare to be satisfied for having this features included in their subscription and it is possible that in the future may decide to use them.

We find a link between frequency of participation in aerobics classes and satisfaction regarding communication with the instructor. Thus, subjects who feel very satisfied with communication with instructors, participate more often in aerobic classes. They participate in aerobics classes in average of 5-7 times per week compared to those who are not satisfied with the way they communicate with the specialist in physical exercise and leisure activities (they participate in aerobics classes 2-3 times per week).

Comparing the offer of the fitness centre A and B have the same number of aerobics classes, so that at first glance we can say that A has subscriptions at a higher price, but B has separate subscription for a program (kangoo jumps) that A has it bundled in the price of the regular subscription.

Comparing the subscription price of four fitness centre in the area, we find that subjects participating in this study pay one of the highest prices for monthly subscription.

Significant percentage of those who live at a distance of about 30-45 minutes of walking, keeping in mind that in the area there are other 3 big sports centre, can be an indicator that they are satisfied with the quality of the services provided by the sports centre A.

## 6. Conclusions

The multitude of the aerobics classes offered by a fitness centre is another reason that makes customers chose a fitness centre instead of another. An efficient communication based on trust and understanding during physical exercise in leisure time is an essential aspect that contributes on establishing a professional relationship between the participants in aerobics classes and instructors.

Making group photos with the participants at the end of activities is an interesting approach that can help participants feel a sense of belonging to the group and thus to the sports centre.

The feeling of belonging to the group and to the fitness centre makes more difficult for the client to give up to the services offered by the fitness centre.

Participants satisfaction in sport and physical activity programs is important not only for sports centers, which is a real source of getting genuine information for sports centres that can improve their work and profit. Satisfied clients are more loyal and can bring new clients. Participants satisfaction is also a source of that can benefit the state and private companies where clients work by the fact that employees who practice physical activities are more efficient at work, have a good physical condition, optimal self-esteem, lower levels of occupational stress, management more efficient operations.

Practicing physical education and sports is beneficial for associations, societies, companies interested in improving the quality of life of employees and their efficiency in the workplace, the health ministry by reducing treatment costs of people affected by inactivity, occupational stress, tobacco use, overweight, low self-esteem,

schools, universities, where participants study by optimizing management activities, social integration, improvement of physical and mental health.

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